

## **Rangeland Health Standards Assessment**

### **Wastina Allotment #901**

### **Cinder Butte Allotment #902**

### **Webster Allotment #906**

### **Valley Allotment #911 Allotment Overview Wastina #901**

**Allotment Boundaries and Pastures: See Attached Map**

**7.5 Minute Topographic Map: McCarty Butte**

**AUMs of Authorized Use: 419**

**Permitted Season: Spring, Summer, Fall 59 Cattle 4/01-11/02**

**Grazing System: Deferred Rest Rotation. Each pasture is grazed for approximately one month, and at least one pasture is rested each year.**

The Wastina Allotment is located approximately 15 miles north of Silver Lake, Oregon. 6366 Acres of public land are within the allotment boundary. The allotment is categorized as an M, Maintain based on the 1986 rating form which is summarized as follows:

Range condition is satisfactory.

Forage production potential is moderate to high and present production is near potential.

No serious conflicts or controversy exist. The area is within deer winter range.

Opportunity may exist for positive economic returns.

Present management is satisfactory.

### **Allotment Overview Cinder Butte Allotment #902**

**Allotment Boundaries and Pastures: See Attached Map**

**7.5 Minute Topographic Maps: Fort Rock, McCarty Butte**

**AUMs of Authorized Use: Active preference is 891 AUMs, 600 AUMs are currently licensed.**

**Permitted Season: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter 126 Cattle 4/15-11/15.**

**Grazing System:** The planned grazing system from the Lakeview EIS was a deferred rest rotation. The grazing system is not fully operational at this time. The BLM and new grazing permittee are trying grazing treatments which meet plant health needs, but also fit into the permittees overall grazing operation. Two pastures are alternated for spring/summer use prior to cattle going to forest service lands. The other pastures are used in the late summer/fall yearly. Pastures with bitterbrush are used in the spring.

The Cinder Butte Allotment located immediately west of the town of Fort Rock, Oregon. Land status within the allotment is 11,216 acres of public land. The allotment is categorized as an M, Maintain, based on the 1982 rating sheet summarized as follows:

Range condition is satisfactory.

Forage production potential is moderate to high and present production is near potential.

No serious resource use conflicts or controversy exist. The allotment is within deer winter range.

Opportunity may exist for positive economic returns.

Present management is satisfactory. AMP needs revision, review winter use.

## **Allotment Overview Webster Allotment #906**

**Location:** See Attached Map

**7.5 Minute Topographic Map:** Sixteen Butte

**AUMs of Authorized Use:** 112

**Permitted Season:** Summer, Fall 68 Cattle 6/1-10/30

**Grazing System:** Seasonal Use

The Webster Allotment is located approximately 12 miles northeast of Fort Rock, Oregon portions of the allotment are within the Devils Garden WSA. Land status includes approximately 1631 acres of public land and 3416 acres of private land. The Webster Allotment is categorized as an M, Maintain allotment, although the allotment was recommended for C, Custodial in 1982.

The M category was selected because of the resource values within the Devils Garden WSA. Rating criteria as of 1982 are summarized as follows:

Range condition is satisfactory, all acreage is in good condition.

Forage production potential is moderate to high and present production is near potential.

Serious resource conflicts or controversy may exist. The allotment is partially within a WSA and is in deer winter range. Land ownership is mixed with water sources being on private land.

Present management is satisfactory or is the only logical practice. This is a single pasture allotment containing more private land than federal land.

## **Allotment Overview Valley Allotment #911**

**Location:** See attached map

**7.5 Minute Topographic Maps:** Hayes Butte, Schaub Lake

**AUMs of Authorized Use:** 613

**Permitted Season:** Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter 88 Cattle 4/1-7/15 & 10/15-12/15. The Hayes Butte pasture has been grazed in the spring prior to cattle going to the forest, but is not used every

**spring. The other pastures have been used in the fall if grazed.**

The Valley Allotment is located approximately 6 miles southeast of Fort Rock, Oregon. Land status within the allotment is 6600 acres of public land and 769 acres of private land.

The allotment is categorized as an M category allotment based on the 1982 rating form, which is summarized as follows:

Range condition is satisfactory.

Forage production potential is moderate to high and present production is near potential.

No serious resource conflicts or concerns exist. Some concerns are roads, rights of ways, fences on private lands. The area is within deer winter range.

Opportunity may exist for positive economic returns.

Present management is satisfactory.

**STANDARD 1 - Upland Watershed -Upland soils exhibit infiltration and permeability rates, moisture storage, and stability that are appropriate to soil, climate, and landform.**

Indicators used to evaluate this standard are Soil Surface Factor (SSF), which documents erosion class and soil susceptibility to accelerated erosion; plant community composition, which indicates the root capacity of the soil profile; grazing management, and existing vegetation monitoring (forage utilization studies). Please refer to the attached maps and site writeup forms from the Ecological Site Inventory (ESI) for North Lake County. This data is preliminary, may be edited at any time and is therefore used for estimation purposes only. Portions of the Cinder Butte Allotment #902 and Valley Allotment #911 were cultivated historical under the Homestead Act and these areas may not be capable of meeting the standard.

This standard is being met on the Wastina Allotment #901, Webster Allotment#906 and Hayes Butte pasture of the Valley Allotment #911. Overall these allotments are functioning properly as indicated by the amount and distribution of ground cover, observations from the ecological site inventory including SSF and existing upland forage utilization surveys. This standard is met in the Cinder Butte Allotment #902 and the Ryegrass and Dunes pastures of the Valley Allotment #911; however, vegetative cover is reduced, the moisture storage capacity of the plant root system is reduced, and high salinity in the Ryegrass and Dunes pastures of the Valley Allotment is restricting infiltration and permeability rates.

All of the public acreage within the Wastina, Webster and Valley Allotments have an SSF rating of stable to slight ranging from 8-30%. Except that the dunes systems are rated moderate and 15% is unknown. This 15% represents vegetative communities too small to be mapped, transition zones and rock outcrops.

The grazing on the Wastina Allotment is a six pasture deferred rest rotation. One pasture is rested each year. The other pastures are grazed from one month to six weeks each. The Webster allotment is grazed season long from June 1<sup>st</sup> to November 15<sup>th</sup>. Livestock use has been low, utilization levels on public lands have been slight to light. Water sources are on private land, therefore, the majority of use is on private land. The Cinder Butte Allotment is used in the spring, late summer and fall. Pastures used during the spring are grazed every other year. Late summer and fall pastures are used every year. The Hayes Butte pasture of the Valley Allotment is normally used in spring every other year. The Ryegrass and Dunes pastures are normally grazed in fall or winter.

The grazing systems are designed to maintain healthy perennial vegetative communities. The root systems of perennial vegetation assist in holding soil in place. Perennial vegetation provides protective cover to reduce soil movement, decrease compaction and thus increase infiltration.

Species composition on the Wastina Allotment #901 includes a variety of native deep rooted species well distributed throughout the allotment including ponderosa pine, mountain big sagebrush, bitterbrush, Idaho fescue and western needlegrass. These species provide adequate cover to assist in properly functioning soils.

Species composition on the Cinder Butte #902 allotment is similar to the east side of the Wastina Allotment except that the overall cover is reduced, herbaceous understory is sparse and invasive species including cheatgrass and rabbitbrush are also abundant. The main contributing factor is the historical attempts to cultivate this land under the Homestead Act. Attempts were unsuccessful and the land was returned to federal ownership. Current grazing strategies are adequate to maintain the existing conditions and are not contributing towards not meeting this standard.

Species composition on the Webster Allotment #906 includes a variety of native deep rooted species well distributed throughout the allotment, including Idaho fescue, bluebunch wheatgrass, mountain big sagebrush, bitterbrush and ponderosa pine which provide adequate ground cover to assist in functioning soils.

Species composition on the Hayes Butte pasture of the Valley #911 Allotment includes juniper, Mountain big sagebrush and a variety of grass species such as bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue and Thurber's needlegrass. These species provide adequate cover to assist in functioning soils. The Ryegrass and Dunes pastures vary from playas to sand dunes. Vegetation includes basin big sagebrush and rabbitbrush with little herbaceous understory other than creeping wildrye. Cheatgrass has invaded much of this area. The lack of perennial vegetation in the Ryegrass and Dunes pastures has reduced the soils ability to function properly. The main contributing factor is the historical attempts to cultivate this land under the Homestead Act. Attempts were unsuccessful and the land was returned to federal ownership. **Current grazing strategies are adequate to maintain the existing conditions and are not contributing towards these areas not meeting the standard.**

**STANDARD 2 - Riparian/Wetland-Riparian-wetland areas are in properly functioning physical condition appropriate to soil, climate, and landform.**

The standard does not apply to these allotments because there are not intermittent or perennial streams or wetland areas on the allotments. Water sources are from wells or hauling of water.

**STANDARD 3 -Ecological Processes-Healthy, productive, and diverse plant and animal populations and communities appropriate to soil, climate, and landform are supported by ecological processes of nutrient cycling, energy flow, and hydrologic cycle.**

Indicators used to evaluate this standard include vegetative composition, presence of weed species ecological status, observed apparent trend (OAT), current plant composition as compared to a defined Potential Natural Community (PNC) for the identified soil type and precipitation zone. The information

used is part of the North Lake Ecological Site Inventory which is preliminary at this time. See Table 1 for summary of the seral stages present on each allotment. Acreage not listed in a seral stage is unknown and represents inclusions within vegetative communities, transition zones and plant communities too small to be mapped. See attached maps and site write ups for Seral stage, SSF, (OAT) and ESI. ESI is displayed with a Map Unit Number (MUN). Weed concerns in the 901, 902, 906 and 911 include spotted knapweed and diffuse knapweed invasions that may enter the Lakeview Resource Area especially adjacent main roads, a few areas of spotted knapweed have been reported in the 901, 902 and 906 allotments.

This standard is being met on the Wastina Allotment #901, Webster Allotment #906, 70% of the Valley Allotment #911 and 40% of the Cinder Allotment #902. The standard is not met on approximately 7022 (63%) acres in the #902 Allotment and 1166(18%) acres in the Valley Allotment that have stabilized below the standard and are not capable of meeting the standard. **The current livestock grazing is not considered to be contributing the current conditions.** Lack of perennial cover as a result of cultivation during the homesteading era is the main contributor.

The largest vegetative component on the Wastina Allotment is Ponderosa Fescue Hills, shown as MUN 618B on the attached maps. Potential vegetation on this site includes ponderosa pine, mountain big sagebrush, bitterbrush, Idaho fescue and western needlegrass. The present plant composition has many of the potential species, and is considered Late seral. The vegetation east of Highway 31 is mainly Pumice10-12 shown as MUN 39 and 566B on the attached maps. Potential vegetation east of highway 31 is similar but does not include ponderosa pine. A review of the range monitoring data (photos, trend transects, climate, field observations, OAT and professional judgment indicates that the majority of the allotment is in good condition with a static or upward trend.

The largest vegetative component on the Cinder Butte Allotment is Pumice Plains 8-11 shown as MUN 745B, and 77 on the attached maps. Potential vegetation on these sites include mountain big sagebrush, needle-and-thread grass, and western needlegrass. Sites slightly higher in precipitation (10-12) have potential for bitterbrush. Several smaller areas have potential for basin big sagebrush rather than mountain big sagebrush shown as MUN 32, 33, 753A and 751B on the attached maps. A review of the range monitoring data (photos, trend transects, climate, field observations, OAT and professional judgment indicates that the majority of the allotment (approximately 60%) is in fair or poor condition with a downward trend these areas are shown as MUN 33,43, 55, 77, 751B, 753A. The remaining 40% is in fair to good condition with a static or upward trend (1964 acres have an upward trend and 2230 acres have a static trend).

The largest vegetative component on the Webster Allotment is in the Pumice 10-12 Range Site. Shown on the attachments as map unit number (MUN) 39. Potential vegetation on this site includes bitterbrush, mountain big sagebrush, Idaho fescue and western needlegrass. The other two Range Sites Juniper-Pine Lavaland 10-12 (MUN 146) and Ponderosa Fescue Hills 12-14 (MUN 618B) have similar understory vegetation with Juniper and ponderosa pine overstory. The OAT indicates 58% of the allotment has a Static trend and 42% of the allotment has an Upward trend. The current vegetation has many components of the potential. Seral stages are described in Table 1. A review of the range monitoring data (photos, trend transects, climate, field observations, OAT and professional judgment indicates that the majority of the allotment (80%) is in good condition with a static to upward trend.

The largest vegetative component in the Valley Allotment is Pumice North 10-12 located in the Hayes Butte pasture and shown as MUN 642C on the attached maps. The Potential vegetation on this site is juniper, mountain big sagebrush, Idaho fescue, and bluebunch wheatgrass. The majority of this range site is considered in PNC at this time. The dominant range site in the other two pastures is Droughty Bottom 8-10. The potential vegetation on this site is basin big sagebrush and great basin wildrye. This area is not presently near potential for lack of perennial grasses and cheatgrass invasion. A review of the range monitoring data (photos, trend transects, climate, field observations, observed apparent trend (OAT) and professional judgement indicates that the majority of the allotment (42%) is in good to excellent condition with a static to upward trend. 16% of the allotment has a downward trend. The remaining acreage is in fair condition with a static trend.

Table-1

Allotment	Acres of Allotment at Seral Stage				% of Allotment			
	Early	Mid	Late	PNC	Early	Mid	Late	PNC
901	0	817	5224	0	0	13%	82%	0
902	1374	8076	1143	0	12%	72%	10%	0
906	0	245	1142	0	0	15%	70%	0
911	136	2698	1453	2351	2%	37%	20%	32%

**STANDARD 4 - Water Quality Standards- Surface water and groundwater quality, influenced by agency actions, complies with State water quality standards.**

This standard is not applicable to the allotments because there are no perennial streams or areas that would be guided by State water quality standards.

**STANDARD 5 - Biological Diversity-Habitats support healthy, productive, and diverse populations and communities of native plants and animals (including special status species and species of local importance) appropriate to soil, climate, and landform.**

**This standard is being met except for approximately 60% of the Cinder Butte Allotment, and 39% of the Valley Allotment.**

Overall the allotments exhibit a wide diversity of native plant communities, have few noxious weed infestations, adequate litter and standing dead material is left at the end of each grazing season to provide proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling and energy flow and are meeting the standard.

Some plant communities, because of past use, unsuccessful cultivation efforts, weed invasions or other histories of disturbance are incapable of meeting this standard. **The current livestock grazing in not contributing towards not meeting this standard.**

The ESI data summarized in Standard 3 and shown in the attached maps, and site write ups, show a mix of vegetation and vegetation stages in the allotments.

.There have been surveys for several specific Bureau sensitive plants in the 901, 902, 906 and 911 Allotments, using no plants were found. There are no known Bureau sensitive plants found with the allotment.

Special status wildlife species or their habitats that are present within these allotments include the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), burrowing owl (*Speotyto cunicularia*), Lewis' woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*), white-headed woodpecker (*Picoides albolarvatus*), black-backed woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*), Townsends big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), and pygmy rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*). There are also three species with high public interest. These include sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) and elk (*Cervus elaphus*).

No nesting habitat exists within these allotments for the peregrine falcon, although it is suspected that they may be an occasional visitor to the area. Some nesting habitat occurs within the western part of the Wastina Allotment for the bald eagle. Bald eagle foraging does occur within the allotments, however it is probably restricted mostly to road killed deer adjacent to the major roadways and occasional carrion scattered through the allotments. There are no resource conflicts for peregrine falcons or bald eagles.

Habitat for the three species of woodpeckers occurs in the western half of the Wastina (901) Allotment. This habitat is suitable, for black-backed and Lewis' woodpeckers. White-headed woodpeckers are known to occur within this area, however densities are probably low due to limited number of pine seeds as a food source. There are no resource conflicts for these species.

Habitat is present for ferruginous hawk, burrowing owl and pygmy rabbits, but locations for these species are not known within the allotments. No specific inventories have been conducted to date for these species within these allotments, however there are sightings within the surrounding area and they are suspected to occur within the allotments. There are no known roost sites within these allotments for Townsends big-eared bats, however known roosting sites occur adjacent to the Webster (906) Allotment and foraging is suspected to occur within this allotment. There are no resource conflicts for these species.

All four allotments are within mule deer winter range. Conflicts exist within these allotments due to the timing of fall grazing and the presence of bitterbrush. Bitterbrush is a key forage species for wintering mule deer. Although timing of grazing is a conflict, bitterbrush abundance and browse use appears to be somewhat stable at this time. This is probably due to the low number of AUMs authorized for use and the short duration of use within bitterbrush areas. Generally, fall use is discouraged within portions of these allotments that have significant amounts of bitterbrush. Bitterbrush trends should be monitored within these areas and appropriate action taken if use by cattle is excessive. Although elk are relatively uncommon within these allotments, they do use the allotments on a regular basis. No major resource conflicts exist for elk at this time.

Sage-grouse habitat exists within all four allotments. There is only one known lek site within these allotments located in Webster (906). Sage-grouse densities within these areas are low when compared to other similar areas to the east. These allotments are on the edge of the range for sage-grouse and habitats are marginal in much of the allotments due to pine forests, juniper expansion and historic cultivation practices during the homesteading era. Approximately 70% (4500 acres) of habitats within the Wastina

(901) Allotment are considered non-suitable for sage-grouse due to pine forests and expansion of western juniper. Of the remaining 30%, about half (900 acres) is non-suitable due to lack of sufficient sagebrush cover. This is mainly due to historic cultivation during the homesteading era when sagebrush habitats were converted to cultivated field and after abandonment, rabbit brush tends to dominate these sites and sage brush is very slow to reestablish. The remaining 15% (900 acres) is mostly suitable for brood rearing habitats with some nesting and wintering habitats available. There are no major conflicts for sage-grouse within this Allotment. Juniper management, although a small problem now, will become an increasing problem in the future if current trends continue.

Within the Cinder Butte Allotment (902), approximately 50% (6000 acres) are considered non-suitable for sage-grouse. Much of the area was also cultivated during the homesteading era and has never returned to sagebrush habitats. Some western juniper also occurs in the southwestern corner of the Allotment. The remaining 50% is suitable sage-grouse habitat with 1% (1000 acres) nesting, 34% (4000 acres) brood rearing and 15% (1800 acres) winter habitats respectively. There are no major conflicts for sage-grouse within this Allotment.

Public land within the Webster (906) Allotment makes up approximately 1600 acres. About 40% (640 acres) is non-habitat with pine and juniper habitats making up most of this. The remaining 60% consists of 30 % (480 acres) is nesting, 20% (320 acres) brood rearing, and 10% (160 acres) winter habitats. There is one lek located on public lands in a low sage area. There are no major resource conflicts for sage-grouse within this Allotment .

Sage grouse habitats within the Valley (911) Allotment consist of 0% nesting, 5% brood rearing, 10% winter and 85% non-habitats. There are two primary reasons for the amount of non-habitat within this Allotment. The southern portion near Hayes butte is covered in dense juniper and provides no habitat. The northern portion has some salt desert scrub communities that are considered non-habitat and much of it has been intensively cultivated at one time or another. No major resource conflicts for sage-grouse within this Allotment.

Overall, this standard is being met for wildlife species within these Allotments. Past use from cultivation, control of wildland fire and invasion of exotic plants has made some portions of these Allotments unuseable for some species of wildlife. Some areas could benefit from restoration efforts, however, effectiveness of these efforts would be doubtful on historically cultivated areas.

### **Current Management and Recent Management Changes**

Current livestock management is satisfactory and changes are not recommended. Livestock management will continue to be consistent with deer winter range objectives. Allotment boundaries for the Cinder Butte Allotment #902 and the Webster Allotment #906 were modified several years ago. Changes need to be made on Allotment maps and district maps as shown in the attachments. The 906 Allotment is included in the Fort Rock Fringe Area recommended for prescribed burning. In addition to the burn new fencing is recommended east and south of the road bordering the lava fields and the old boundary fence is recommended for removal.



**Team Members**

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**Title**

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Supervisory RMS  
Supervisory NRS

**Determination**

- ( ) Existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on the Wastina #901, Cinder Butte #902, Webster#906 and Valley #911 Allotments promote achievement of significant progress towards the Oregon Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health and conform with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
- ( ) Existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on the Wastina #901, Cinder Butte #902, Webster#906 and Valley #911 Allotments will require modification or change prior to the next grazing season to promote achievement of the Oregon Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health and conform with the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.

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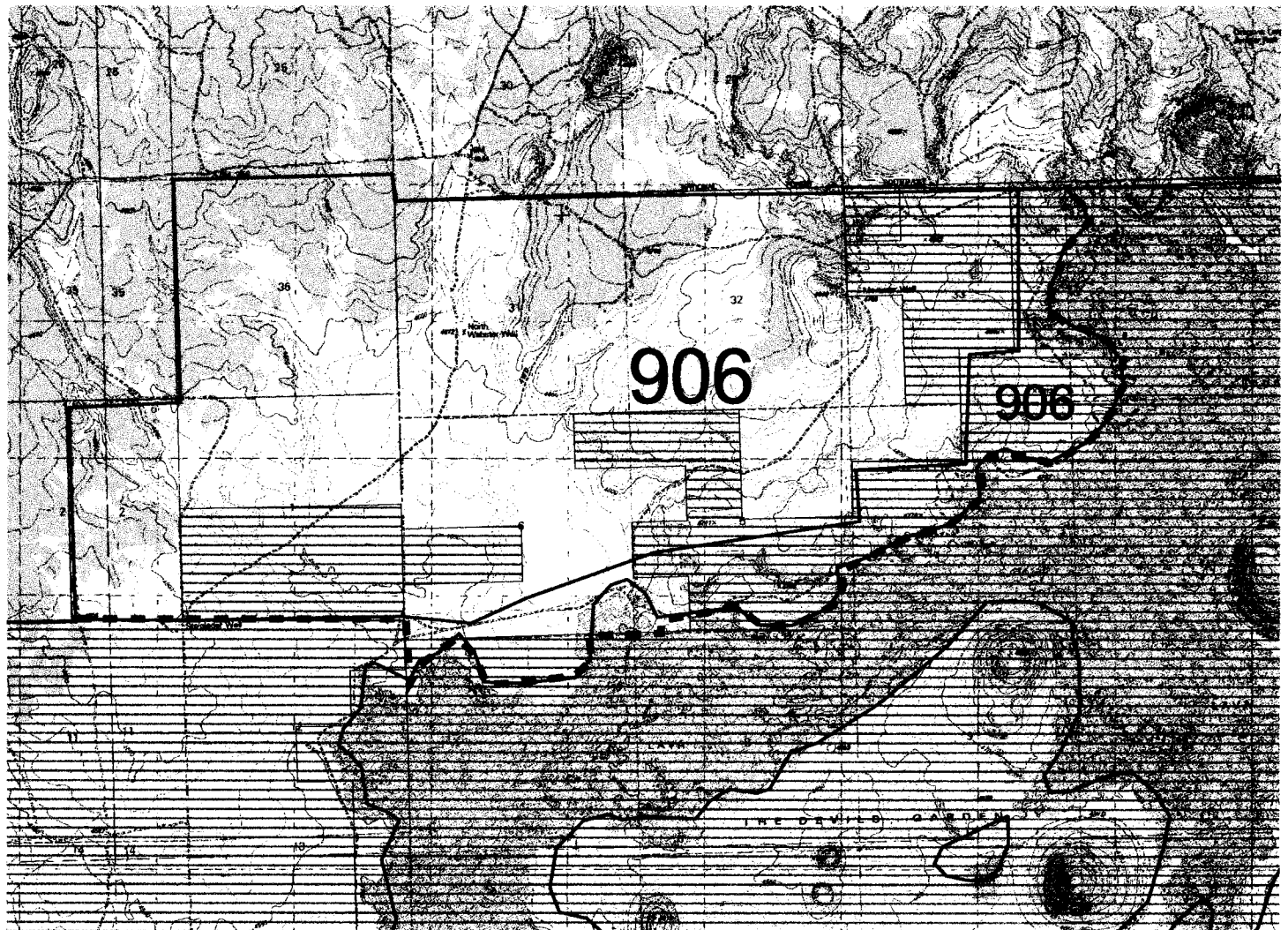
Acting Manager, Lakeview Resource Area

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Date

# Webster Allotment #906

## Land Status & Boundaries

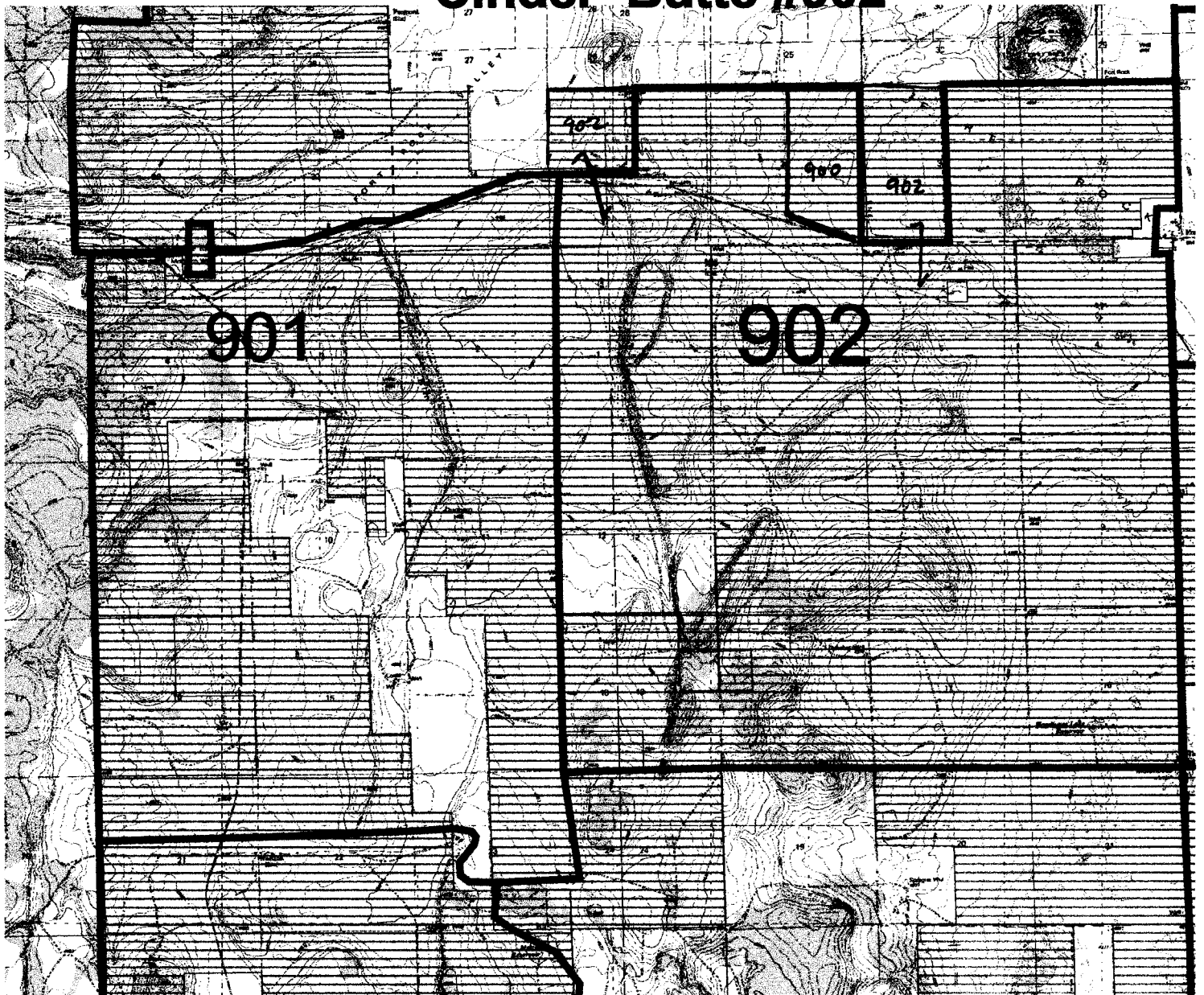


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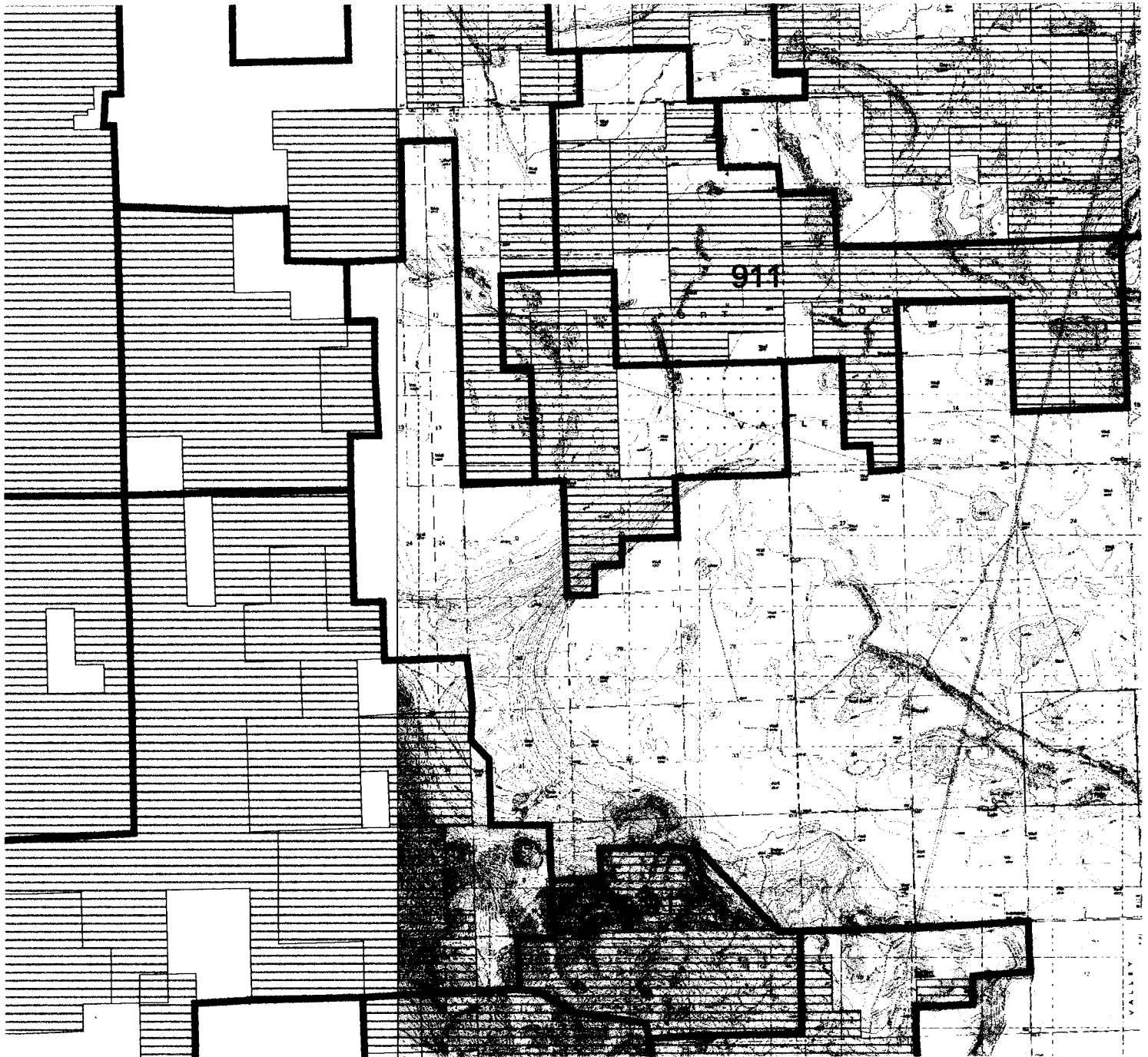
 **Corrected Allotment Boundary**  
**Allotment Boundary**  
**Ownership**  
BLM  
PV  
ST






# Land Status Wastina #901 & Cinder Butte #902



# Land Status Valley Allotment #911



 Allotment Boundary  
Ownership

 BLM  
 PV  
 ST

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